M/s. Sterling Holiday Resorts (India) Limited for operation of a Special train for the tourist centres of Rajasthan and Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c). Indian Railways have entered into an agreement with M/s. Sterling Holiday Resorts (India) Ltd., Madras in respect of two tourist trains to be known as Royal Indian (Northern) which will operate between Delhi-Jaipur-Agra-Gwalior-Jhansi (Khajuraho)-Varanasi-Lucknow-Delhi and the Royal Indian (Southern) which will operate between Bangalore-Mysore-Madras-Kodaikanal Road-Kanyakumari-Trivandrum-Cochin-Mettupalayam (Ooty) - Bangalore.

Air Pollution due to Bio-Fuels

3211. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the air pollution is widespread in the rural areas where bio-fuels are used for cooking;

(b) if so, whether any study has been conducted about the volume of air pollution in the rural areas;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to check such air pollution in the rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) to (c). The nature and extent of air pollution in rural areas, where bio-fuels such as wood, dung cakes, crop residues and biogas are used, depend upon the nature and quality of fuel used, design of chulhas, ventilation system, etc. A number of studies have been conducted on air pollution in rural areas by the Tata Energy Research Institute and others, but all such studies are of limited nature relying on a small sample size. During the cooking period, the levels of particulates and carbon-monoxide encountered were not found exceeding the Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) prescribed by Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA), USA.

(d) The steps taken to check air pollution, including the rural areas, are given below :

1. The Government is implementing two Central sector schemes, namely, National Programme on Improved Chulha and National Project on Biogas Development which caters to family-size biogas plants. The Government is also providing subsidy and other incentives for promotion of these devices in the rural areas with the objective to reduce air pollution in rural areas.
2. Ambient air quality standards have been prescribed for major pollutants for the different areas.
3. General environmental awareness campaigns have been launched.

Indian Prison Act, 1894

3212. SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Human Rights Commission has urged the Government to make changes in the provisions of the Indian Prison Act, 1894;

(b) whether a Bill has been prepared and submitted by NHRC in this regard to the Union Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Union Government thereto; and

(d) the time by which the Bill is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (c). The Government and National Human Rights Commission are interacting on the possible content of a Bill to cover changes on various aspects of the prison administration.

Tribal Hockey Players in Railways

3213. KUMARI FRIDA TOPNO : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Tribal Hockey players of Railways have brought laurels to the Ministry;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal to establish Hockey Academy with a provision of Astro-Turf in the Tribal belt to hunt out the hidden talents;

(c) if so, whether it is proposed to utilise hundreds of acres of surplus land of the Railways at Bondamunda for the purpose;

(d) if so, the time schedule for the completion of this project; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Indian Railways Hockey Team which include tribal players as well has been giving good performance.

(b) No such proposal is under consideration.

(c) and (d). Does not arise.

(e) The development of sports in tribal areas as also in other areas does not come in the ambit of Railways.